



DRAFT MINUTES

Meeting: PARISH COUNCIL

Date: 6th September 2021

Time: 7.30PM

Venue: PARISH HALL, THORNWOOD COMMON

PRESENT:

Councillors (13) A Buckley (Chairman), Mrs A Grigg, T Blanks, B Clegg, Mrs S Hawkins, G Mulliner, R Spearman, N Bedford, Mrs S Jackman MBE, Ms D Wood, Ms C Coop-Rodia, Mrs P Etherington, A Irvine

Officers in Attendance (3)

Susan Deluca - Clerk

Adriana Jones – Principal Financial Officer

Joanna Tyler – Senior Administrative Officer

Members of the Public (3)

Members of the Press (1)

C21.048 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (2)

Apologies received from Cllrs A Tyler, M Stroud

C21.049 OTHER ABSENCES (0)

C21.050 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council Meeting held on 5th July 2021 were **APPROVED** as a correct record.

The Minutes of the Environmental Committee held on 19th July were **NOTED**.

The Minutes of the Remembrance Sunday Working Group held on 3rd August were **NOTED**.

C21.051 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Mulliner declared a non pecuniary interest in Item 7(d) and Item 13

Cllr Mrs Grigg declared a non pecuniary interest in Item 13

Cllr Spearman declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in any item regarding the Local Plan.

C21.052 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were three members of the public present, however no questions were asked.

C21.053 REPORT OF THE CLERK

Councillors **NOTED** that all staff have been working on all items within the Agenda. The Clerk mentioned a number of papers that had been tabled and advised that these would be referred to under specific Agenda Items.

C21.054 REPORTS & MEMBERS REPORTS

Members **NOTED** that the Clerk had received two written reports, one from Cllr Mulliner and one from Cllr Tyler supporting an item on the Library which the

Clerk had circulated to Members, via email, prior to the Meeting.

a) Chairman's Report – The Chairman reported that he had received some statistics and commented that the IBF appeared to be a lot quieter than expected. He referred to the '10 Point Plan' and commented that it appeared to be working ok since the introduction of extra signage. The Chairman referred to Weald Common and the issue with drainage and advised that he is still awaiting information regarding possible solutions. The Chairman mentioned the traffic calming measures being investigated for Church Lane and Hastingwood and advised that this was still with the EFDC Officers.

b) Vice Chairman's Report - The Vice Chairman referred to July's report (a member of the public had contacted the Vice Chairman regarding the road outside North Weald Village Hall) and advised that the member of the public had asked for thanks to be passed on (referring to the recent repairs undertaken).

c) District & County Councillors Reports – none received.

d) Parish Councillors Reports

Members **NOTED** that the Clerk had received a request from Cllr Mulliner, in his position as Chairman of North Weald Village Hall, regarding the Parish Council Parking Spaces at Weald Common. Cllr Mulliner had asked whether or not the Parking Spaces could have a timed element placed on them. It was noted that the Clerk had looked into this and the only way that this could be done is if a sign is put up stating that cars should only be parked there for a specific allowed time, for example 2 hours. Following discussion, Members **AGREED** that the Clerk would check the Parish Council's agreement and would also need to check with the Parish Council's Auditor before a decision is made. The matter would be included as an Agenda Item for October's Parish Council Meeting.

Councillor Mulliner asked Members if they would consider another item for next month's Agenda. He said that the North Weald Village Hall Committee had recently spent £3,000 to £4,000 on filling in the pot-holes, which added to the £5,000 which had been spent a few years ago for the same problem. Cllr Mulliner said that there had been no answer from Peer Group. He said that as the Parish Council has 8 Parking Spaces allocated, the Charity would like to ask the Parish Council to consider making a contribution towards these costs. Cllr Bedford asked if the Charity had asked EFDC for a contribution. Cllr Mulliner stated that the Trustees did not want to be obligated. Following lengthy conversation, Members **AGREED** that the matter would be included as an Agenda Item for October's Parish Council Meeting and in the meantime the Clerk would investigate the availability of any grant funding

The Chairman asked Councillors permission to bring forward Agenda Item No. 9 All Members AGREED.

C21.055 BUILDING BACK BETTER

Councillors noted that the Government is telling us that Covid 19 has not disappeared, but that we all have to be prepared to live with the disease for 'Many

years to come'. Councillors recalled that the Clerk has used the phrase 'GOING FORWARD' however the preferred phrase seems to be Building Back Better. When this is researched, it is understood why this phrase has been used and that no one really wants to go back completely to old ways. Councillors noted that a series of Reports had been attached to the agenda for their perusal. Members were asked to make a number of decisions regarding these Reports:

- a) *Would Councillors support a move back into the Library with only 2 Members of Staff working from the Office at any one time, also there would be a Storage Area, hours of Operation would be as before, Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 9.15-1.15pm. It would also be available for Meetings on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of the Month. All via an SLA. No rental to be paid at all.*
- b) *It is expected this would be for approximately 3 to 4 years until we have a Parish Council building from Countryside in the new development.*

Cllr Mrs Grigg asked why did we move out originally? The Clerk referred to the Risk Assessments that had been undertaken and said that we had to move out to keep Councillors and Staff safe. The Clerk said that we feel that we could move back safely provided appropriate measures are taken. The Clerk stated that she had spoken at length with the Chairman, who had agreed that the Parish Council would go back on our own terms, not ECC's. Under the SLA, certain works would need to be undertaken in the Staff Room and the Storage Area. Cllr Mrs Jackman MBE, asked if the Office could be extended. The Clerk stated that this would not be required, as only two members of staff would be in the Office at any one time, with the third staff member working from home. The Clerk commented that the staff had found that this worked better and referred to the list of work undertaken during the past 18 months.

The Clerk referred to the office in the Parish Hall and suggested that this could be hired as a Meeting Room. A number of enquiries had been received from organisations and individuals regarding the availability of such a facility. North Weald Village Hall had given the Parish Council 8 chairs which could be set up around a table for meetings. Bookings for the Parish Hall have now started to increase. There are a couple of days when the Parish Council will not be able to operate from the hall due to bookings. The Clerk advised that she is aware that Councillors Tyler and Bedford are in support of the suggestion, as does Cllr Chris Whitbread. The Clerk said that residents are asking when will the Parish Council be going back to the Library. A Member of the Public present supported this statement. Cllr Mrs Etherington said that she supported the plan to move back and referred to long-term plans for the Library under the Neighbourhood Plan. She said that it is a more central hub and easier for residents to walk to.

Cllr Bedford said that he believed it was time to move back and commented that the Parish Hall had worked as an excellent stop gap during the pandemic. Cllr Bedford said that the difference this time is that Cllr Chris Whitbread has spoken about the SLA and will try to get a better deal for the Parish Council. The Chairman said that, with Councillors permission, this matter would be pursued via Cllr Chris Whitbread. All Members **AGREED**.

- c) *Would Members Consider Devolved Services such as Highway Devolutions/Grass Cutting/Small Works if it came with a Budget including Admin.*

Following discussion, the Chairman stated that he believed there were an awful lot of pitfalls which would need to be ironed out.

Cllr Clegg referred back to the Library and asked what would happen in the event of the Library closing. The Clerk said that ECC had given the Library a stay of 5 years and Countryside have said that it will be between 3 and 4 years before the Parish Council have a new building.

The Clerk referred to the subject of Devolution and recalled a meeting that the subject was broached at a meeting attended by herself and the PFO in 2019. ECC spoke about Parish Councils taking on small Highways works for a budget of £5800 and they were told to 'go away', therefore ECC are aware that a larger amount of money would be required. The Clerk said that Cllr Chris Whitbread was made aware of this. Cllr Irvine asked the Clerk to clarify what the Council were being asked. The Clerk said that it is being asked to consider whether or not the Parish Council would sign up to Devolution, however, if it did, it would need to be for a lot more money. The Clerk commented that both herself and the PFO had said that they believe the Parish Council could offer a very good service to residents, but not for the pittance that ECC are offering to pay. Cllr Blanks asked if it would result in a reduction in the council charge for Essex County Council. The Clerk referred back to the comments in the agenda and said that there were many things that ECC would need to look at, including the question of double taxation. The Chairman asked Members if they agreed, in principal, to the Clerk pursuing this matter, all Members **AGREED**.

Cllr Bedford gave his apologies for the remainder of the Meeting.

C21.054 REPORTS & MEMBERS REPORTS CONT.

- e) **Queens Hall Report** – Cllr Ms Wood reported that the hall was receiving a lot more enquiries. The local vicar had enquired about using the hall on a Sunday. Cllr Ms Wood reported that new posts put in to prevent cars parking to allow ambulances through had been damaged.
- f) **Neighbourhood Plan Report** – The PFO reported that feedback had been received from EFDC, however she was still dealing with the Local Plan.
- g) **EFDC Local Plan** – The PFO gave a verbal report. She advised that there are to be no changes in the numbers of housing for the Parish. Members noted that there were some minor changes that would affect the Parish, however the major changes to the Plan are in Epping and near Loughton. Councillors Blanks and Irvine expressed their concerns following which lengthy discussion ensued. The Chairman advised that there would be a presentation at each of the Community Open Day Events. The PFO stated that a Draft Response would be ready towards

the end of next week which would then be circulated to Councillors for comment.

h) Highways Report

Councillors **NOTED** that the Parish Council had been advised that a local business would like to sponsor the Talbot Roundabout. Cllr Mrs Jackman MBE, commented that this is Highways responsibility. Following discussion, Members **AGREED** that the request could be included in the Business Plan for Highways Devolution.

C21.056 FINANCIAL REPORTS

a) List of Cheque & Monthly Statement of Accounts

Members **APPROVED** the list of payments made up to 31st July and 31st August 2021 (circulated prior to the meeting). Members **NOTED** the account balances at the end of the month.

b) Internal Audit - Members were advised that the Internal Auditor would be in attendance on Friday, 12th November to carry out the first part of the Internal Audit.

c) External Audit – Members were advised that PKF Littlejohn had completed the limited Assurance Review of the Parish Council External Audit and AGAR for the year ended 31st March 2021 with all documentation being in order and no matters to report. A Notice of Conclusion of Audit has been placed on the Parish Council's Website as required. Copies of all documentation were attached to the agenda for Members perusal.

C21.057 ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR, VANDALISM & PARISH WARDEN

a) Members recalled that there had been an increase in vandalism and anti-social behaviour within North Weald Village and also some in Thornwood over the last couple of years. Residents are becoming increasingly concerned at this type of behaviour. Early in July, the Clerk was contacted by some residents regarding this matter, following which, the Clerk contacted Essex Police, EFDC and also EFDC Safer Communities. Members noted that a number of things have since happened behind the scenes and in collaboration with June at Village Life, a small working group was held on the 13th August where it was agreed that a Meeting would be held on 17th September at 7pm in North Weald Village Hall. This would be a Meeting for the Residents, by the Residents to discuss their concerns.

Members noted that the Clerk, Chairman, Cllr Mulliner and Cllr Bedford were also in attendance and advised that they had felt that the Parish Council would be content to act as a Meeting Facilitator, in that they would arrange to pay for the venue, advise the relevant authorities, ie., the Police and EFDC Safer Communities, of the Meeting and invite them to attend, undertake any photocopying and putting posters up on Parish Notice boards advertising the Meeting. Those present agreed that this would be the correct way forward and that it would be up to residents to attend the meeting and take up their concerns direct with the Police and Safer Communities. June from Village Life would advertise the Meeting on her Social Media, as would the Parish Council. The Parish Council would also ask David Jackman to issue a Press Release advertising the Meeting.

b) Following the Working Group meeting, it was noted that anti-social behaviour had continued. This has been widely advertised on Social Media over the last two

months and has included:

- Harm to a person
- Damage to property
- Vandalism
- Box of old rotting animal carcasses left at bus stop
- Smashed noticeboards
- Littering
- Damage to trees
- Damage to fences
- Graffiti
- New basket swing in Children's Play Area cut with knife
- Drug offences at various places
- Drone flying

It was noted that the majority of these had been reported to the Police if they had occurred on Parish Council property. Members were reminded that the Parish Council had £2,000 in Reserved Funds to be put towards a 'Police Presence' for the Parish. Members were asked to consider if they wished to add to these funds either by way of 'virement' or in another way, to consider whether or not the appointment of a Parish Warden may be an answer to this. Members **AGREED** that the suggestion of appointing a Parish Warden would be included as an item for the Budget & Precept Meeting to be held later in the year.

The Clerk reported that the latest incident involved a man smashing 20 random trees at Eldridge Wood in the early hours of Saturday morning. Issues were also reported in Tempest Mead and Higham View at the same time. A lady was seen on the CCTV putting the trees back later that morning. This incident has been reported to the Police. The Chairman asked Members to note the date and time of the Anti-Social Behaviour Meeting in their diaries. The Clerk confirmed that representatives from the Police and EFDC Safer Communities would be in attendance.

C21.058 DOG BINS – ADDITIONAL EMPTYING & ADDITIONAL DOG BIN REQUEST

Councillors **NOTED** that the Parish Council had been advised that eleven of the fourteen Parish Council dog bins seem to be becoming increasingly full. The bins have been monitored by the Parish Council and also by the dog bin emptying company and it does seem to be the case. It was noted that we do not know if this is because there had been an increase in people getting more dogs since lockdown or whether it is because more people now work from home and walk their dogs more. Members noted that there had been a number of complaints this year about bins being full to overflowing. A schedule prepared by the dog bin emptying company was attached to the Agenda for Members perusal. The Clerk suggested that Members may wish to monitor the situation for a couple of months. The Chairman agreed and said if any Councillor walked past any of the bins could they make a note and report back if any bin is found to be overflowing. Members noted that the PFO had received notification that the charge for emptying each bin is to increase to £5.00. The Clerk advised that there is no other company in the area which will empty dog bins. Following lengthy conversation, Councillors **AGREED** to monitor the situation

for the next couple of months.

Councillors **NOTED** that a request had been received from a resident for a dog bin, as follows:

“Could there be an additional dog bin at the Black Horse Lane end of the path down to the school? It seems that anyone with a dog will not walk down to the other bin and they just leave any mess there. It cannot be good for the children who have to avoid it.”

Following discussion, Members **AGREED** to monitor the situation and include as an item for the Budget and Precept Meeting in December. Cllr Ms Coop-Rodia agreed to monitor the dog bin in School Green Lane.

C21.059 RE-DEDICATION OF THE NORWEGIAN STONE

Following on from earlier discussions with Members regarding the possible re-dedication of the Norwegian Stone which was installed almost 70 Years ago on the 19th June 1952. Members **NOTED** that a possible date for the re-dedication would be Sunday, 19th June 2022. North Weald Village Hall is unavailable to hire for a Buffet Lunch, however, the Parish Hall at Thornwood has been provisionally booked. It had been suggested that Council may also wish to consider the possibility of re-dedicating the Parish War Memorial in St Andrew’s Churchyard, this was 100 years old in 2019. It was noted that the Clerk would investigate the possibility of doing this at the same time. Cllr Mrs Jackman MBE suggested that North Weald Village Hall be asked to reconsider the booking as it was for next year. Cllr Mulliner said that he would check availability again and report back to the Clerk.

C21.060 REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY EVENTS 2021

Councillors **NOTED** that plans are in hand for the Remembrance Sunday Events. The Vicar and the Bugler have been confirmed for the Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving at the Debt of Honour / Norwegian Stone. A schedule was attached to the Agenda for information. Councillors were **REMINDED** that if they are attending the luncheon, to send their responses back as soon as possible. It was noted that it is the Clerk’s understanding that the Royal British Legion would be organising the Service at the Parish War Memorial in St Andrew’s Church themselves this year, with no assistance required from the Parish Council.

C21.061 DEBT OF HONOUR

Councillors **NOTED** that the Clerk had received notification from Darren Goodey at Epping Forest District Council that works would shortly be undertaken at the Debt of Honour. Councillors **NOTED** that the Parish Council is still awaiting the SLA.

C21.062 PARADE OF SHOPS

Councillors **NOTED** that a request had been sent to the owner of the property and to the Co-op regarding the concerns of a number of residents in relation to the soffits that are underhanging the parade of shops. Concern had been expressed that some persons who visited the shops were concerned for their own safety and also as to the environmental risk. It was noted that the Clerk had contacted Environmental Health at EFDC and also the property owners. It is understood that action is being

undertaken to rectify the matter.

C21.063 STREET CLEANING NORTH WEALD VILLAGE

Councillors **NOTED** that concern had been expressed that the regular Street Cleaner who had left in July would not be replaced with a cleaner who would undertake cleaning on the usual basis and would be replaced with a cleaner who only attended once every 14 days. It was noted that confirmation had been received advising that this was not the case and an email had been received which stated the following:

“The waste management team are not aware who has informed the Parish regarding having the Road Sweeper attend relevant roads in North Weald at least 4 times a week and that they would be only getting an operative attending once every 2 to 3 weeks. However, we have noticed that the Parish Council made an enquiry on the 14th July to the call centre who advised that cleansing took place on the High Road, North Weald every other Friday as this is what is showing on whitespace, we have asked BIFFA to correct this to show a daily.

The daily schedule for the High Road should run from Church Lane to Blackhorse Lane whilst other roads in the area are fortnightly and there has been no change to this.

In the first instance please use this email address wastemanagement@eppingforestdc.gov.uk for any waste related matters but if you have any issues getting a response or resolving an issue, please feel free to email myself.

I apologise for any confusion caused.”

The Clerk was happy to confirm that the roads in North Weald Village would be cleansed as per the above.

C21.064 COMMUNITY EVENTS

Councillors **NOTED** that Community Events would be held on the following dates:

North Weald Village

Friday Evening 24th September 6.30pm to 8.30pm

Thornwood Village Hall

Saturday Morning 25th September 10am to 12.noon

Hastingwood Village Hall

Saturday Afternoon 25th September 2pm – 4pm

The Clerk advised that there would be a rolling slide show of ‘What the Parish Council Has Done’ and each session would have its own Parish Council Ward Councillors Surgery. It was noted that there would also be Neighbourhood Plan and Local Plan Stands, as well as various types of information such as a notice showing what Parish Council, District Council and Essex County Council do. The Clerk advised that it was expected the Councillor Surgeries would last for 45 minutes and asked if Councillors could commit to 20 minutes each. Cllr Irvine confirmed that he would be present at Hastingwood Village Hall and

mentioned having a Volunteer Scheme. The Chairman asked Members to confirm their availability to attend to the Clerk as soon as possible. Cllr Clegg gave his apologies for the Saturday morning session.

C21.065 PARISH GARDEN SPONSORSHIP

Councillors **NOTED** that this year the Parish Council has six sponsors for the Garden at the front of the Parish of Shops. Payment for each Sponsor is £100, making a total of £600. It was noted that North Weald Bassett Preservation Society takes care of the small box garden at the flagpole by supplying all the plants and undertaking any weeding. In exchange, they are provided with an annual plaque.

C21.066 VARIOUS ITEM FOR NOTING

Councillors **NOTED** the following:

- a) Community Garden Launch Wheelers Farm Garden Allotments
- b) EALC AGM – to be held via zoom Thursday 23rd September whole day
- c) Collection points for donations for Afghan Refugees in district – is there a possible collection point in North Weald Bassett Parish
- d) Flagpoles – the Clerk is still getting competitive quotes
- e) Hastingwood Meeting
- f) Parish Police Officer – PC Andy Cook is still our police officer
- g) Formal opening of Cyril Hawkins Close
- h) Thornwood Open Garden Event - £4,709 raised and PC thanked for the hall facilities and car park

C21.067 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

Due to the nature of the item to be discussed, the press and public were asked to leave the meeting and were excluded, the Council believing that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be discussed.

Councillors **NOTED** the contents of the Report attached to the Agenda.

Meeting closed: 9.00pm

Signed

Date